

"Bolduc House"
Ste. Genevieve, Mo.

HABS No. Mo. 1105 HABS
MO.

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6-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT OF MISSOURI.

MULTIPLE
ADDITIONAL
FOLLOWS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

W.T. Trueblood, District Officer,
1520 Chemical Building, St. Louis, Mo.

Eugene L. Pleitsch, Deputy District Officer,
1592 Arcade Building, St. Louis, Mo.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
DISTRICT OF MISSOURI, (No. 1.)

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No-
PROJECT NO. 1105 [REDACTED]

"Bolduc House"

This house located in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, was built in the year 1740 in the old village and was brought to its present location in 1785.

The builder, Peter Bolduc, a very prominent merchant, was one of the early settlers. He came from Canada.

The house is well preserved and the massive oak joists are still solid and strong as the day they were built. Typical French architecture. The wide sweep of the roof extends its protection over a porch the full length of the house.

The house is one and one-half story of log construction, overhanging roof forming porch around the house.

Interesting stone chimneys.

Information: Harry Pefrequin,
Ste. Genegieve, Mo.

EUGENE L. PLEITSCH.

6/3/37

Addendum to:
The Bolduc House
South Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1105

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6-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

An addendum to:
The Bolduc House
123 South Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1105

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Addendum to:
Bolduc House
123 South Main Street
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Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to THE BOLDUC HOUSE

HABS No. MO-1105

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Location: 123 South Main Street, Ste. Genevieve, Ste. Genevieve County,
Missouri

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The following information was recorded by Alexander Piaget and Charles van Ravenswaay at the time the photograph was taken:

Louis Houck in "History of Missouri" (vol. 1, p. 356) contends that the house may date as early as 1745 (?) and that it was moved to the present site from the old village, following the great flood of 1785. Mrs. Ida Schaff of St. Marys says (August 1937): "You will be told that the Bolduc house was built by Louis Bolduc in the old town of Ste. Genevieve in 1735 and moved to the present location after the great flood of 1785. This cannot be proved and my opinion is the house was built just where it stands and was the officers quarters within the Fort. The site was granted to the widow of Louis Bolduc."

The kitchen was not necessarily a part of the main building. It frequently occupied an appentis built as an addition to the rear or to one of the sides of the house. Occasionally a section of the galerie was enclosed for this purpose, making a room which is called today a bas-côte. (Dorrance, "The Survival of French in the Old District of Ste. Genevieve," The University of Missouri Studies, Columbia, Missouri, April 1, 1935).

PROJECT INFORMATION

The Piaget-van Ravenswaay Survey consists of a number of photographs, primarily of sites and structures in Missouri, which were taken before 1938 by Alexander Piaget and after that by Paul Piaget, both in conjunction with Charles van Ravenswaay. Photographs of buildings were incorporated into the HABS collection in 1985 by Laura Rupp and in 1986 by Deborah Fulton, HABS historians. A master list is available in the ~~MO-1800~~ records for MO-1800.

Addendum to
Louis Bolduc House
123 South Main Street
Ste. Genevieve
Ste. Genevieve County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1105

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
LOUIS BOLDOC HOUSE

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Location: South Main Street, Ste. Genevieve, Ste. Genevieve
County, Missouri 63670

Present Owner: Colonial Dames of America

Present Use: Historic house museum

Significance: This is one of the largest, best known examples of vertical log construction in Ste. Genevieve, a National Historic Landmark Historic District. Restored in the 1950s to its original form, it preserves the character of creole architecture. Some of the upright members are exposed and visible on the exterior, while the interior is furnished with French colonial furniture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: c. 1792. Louis Bolduc first owned property and lived in the original settlement of Ste. Genevieve, about a mile south of the present town on the river. Because of flooding and erosion of the site, the old town was abandoned beginning about 1785 for new house sites in the present town. It has been suggested that the house was first built in the old town and then disassembled and moved to the new. The building contract regarding the house Louis Bolduc built in 1770 survives but offers different dimensions than the house that now stands. Bolduc moved from the old town to the new town in 1790 or so, when his house was about 20 years old. Because it had been exposed to repeated floods, it is unlikely his residence was worth salvaging. Bolduc probably built a new dwelling constructed of recently cut timbers. Dendrochronological analysis supports 1792 for the date of construction.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Louis Bolduc lived in this house until his death in 1815. It remained in the family and was occupied by Zoe Bolduc in the 1930s. The house was acquired in 1949 by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, as a gift from the Mathews Foundation to the Missouri Society of the Colonial Dames.
3. Original plans and construction: probably a two-room dwelling.

4. Alterations and additions: The house was divided into two dwelling units at an early date, with many added partitions, and a gable roof replaced the original hipped roof. This condition was recorded in the 1938 HABS drawings. The house was restored for the Colonial Dames, with support from the Mathews Foundation, under the direction of restoration architect Ernest Allen Connally, in 1956-57. The restored condition was recorded in the 1985 HABS drawings. The squared timbers in the ceiling of the south section appear to have been reworked sometime after they were initially harvested and shaped. Although they can not be accurately dated, they may be early enough to have been moved up from the old town.

B. Historical Context:

Ste. Genevieve was one of the most important French Colonial settlements in the mid-Mississippi valley, and the one that best preserves the architecture of the period. The house is located on the principal road in the early settlement, a road that ran south to the old village of Ste. Genevieve and Kaskaskia beyond that, and north to the new village of Ste. Genevieve. The Bolduc family, originally named Boisleduc, was a wealthy and influential family in the community who came from a French town bearing their early surname. Louis Bolduc, although illiterate, was an diversified entrepreneur who made his fortune in agriculture, lead mining, salt making, and commerce. His well-preserved house represents the lifestyle associated with an established and respected family of former European peasant stock.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a large example of vertical log construction on a stone foundation, what the French called "poteaux sur sole." Its plan, general form, and detail are characteristic of creole architecture. Because of its restored condition and museum status, it is of particular interest and importance.
2. Condition of fabric: good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: One story on an elevated cellar with a high attic, 74'-8 1/2" across the front by 48'-1 1/2" deep.

2. Foundations: Random cut stone.
3. Walls: Vertical, hewn, white oak logs, mortised into a sill, infilled with bouzillage, plastered on both interior and exterior sides.
4. Structural system, framing: Vertical log structure on a sill carrying a plate, hewn logs closely spaced, floor beams mortised into the sill and the plate. The roof exhibits the king-post trusses with longitudinal braces and mortise and tenon joinery.
5. Porches: A typical French colonial gallery on four sides of the house, interrupted by an independent, but attached kitchen at the northwest corner of the house. Porch posts of red cedar. Secondary rafters extend over the gallery giving the characteristic double pitch to the roof.
6. Chimneys: Two chimneys serving massive fireplaces in the two principal rooms, and one in the kitchen attached at the northwest corner, all of stone.
7. Openings: Principal entrances near the center of both long sides of the house open into a passage, or deep narrow room. There is only one entrance to the kitchen at the northwest corner of the house and is from the outside. There is no outside entrance to the cellar but stairs lead down from the passageway on the main level to it.
 - a. Doorways and doors: The 1938 drawings recorded an interesting batten door with original hardware which originally lead to the northwest room has been removed from the house and survives as the entrance to the Old House Antique Shop, Kimmswick, Missouri, and another batten door with brass knob and iron hinges which was found lying detached in the attic.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung windows, which were shown in the 1938 drawings, were replaced with six light casement windows in the 1956-57 restoration. Early solid panel shutters were also found in the attic, surviving with iron hinges. They provided models for the restoration, when later louvered shutters were removed.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The 1938 drawings record a

double pitched gable roof, covered with corrugated iron, but with most of the original trussed roof structure in place. There was clear evidence for the reconstruction of the original hipped roof in the restoration of 1956-57. The restored roof is covered with wooden shakes.

- b. Cornice, eaves: No eave projection, open plate at eave line of the porch.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: There are three rooms; a semi-central passage between two larger rooms, each end room with a chimney along the north wall. A kitchen with separate outside entrance and a fireplace is at the northwest corner of the house and appears original.
- b. Cellar: Unfinished, dirt floor.
- c. Attic: Simple open space, floored but otherwise unfinished. The attic floor is at two different levels over the two rooms. At the south end, the floor is made of continuous heavy timbers, averaging 7" thick, abutting each other side by side.

- 2. Stairways: A stairway leads up from the cellar to the main level through the interior passage and an additional steep, open stairway leads up to the attic.

- 3. Flooring: 1 1/2" board flooring.

- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster walls exposed wooden ceilings.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Earliest surviving doors are batten, used as models for the restoration.
- b. Windows: Two leaf casement windows, six light sash, batten shutters.

- 6. Decorative features and trim: Two mantels shown in the 1938 drawings, were preserved on fireplaces in the house. They both were in a Federal style which suggests that they were early additions to

the house. They were removed in the restoration of 1956-57.

7. Hardware: Many examples of early hardware survive on the Bolduc House: iron shutter and door hinges with forged nails, wrought iron latches and shutter dogs, brass door knobs and china door knobs.
8. Mechanical equipment: All modern mechanical equipment was removed in the 1956-57 restoration.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces east on Main Street and occupies a large lot bordered on the north by Market Street.
2. Historic landscape design: All trees but one are apple, the other is elm. A vegetable garden, herb garden, and small grape growing arbor are directly behind the Bolduc House at the rear of the property.
3. Outbuildings: A smoke house and well are at the rear of the houses. A sidewalk connects the Bolduc House to the Le Meilleur House, approximately 50' to the north and in the same lot. As part of the restoration, a palisade fence of cedar poles was erected around the lot.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: Early photographs of the house, c. 1900-1920, are preserved in the Vincent J. Dunker Collection, owned by Mrs. Elmer L. Donze, 15 South Fourth Street, Ste. Genevieve, copy negatives owned by the University of Missouri-Columbia Ste. Genevieve Project.
- B. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources: Deed records in the Ste. Genevieve County Clerk's Office, County Courthouse. Other records in the Ste. Genevieve Archives (SGA), collected on microfilm, Western Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri-Columbia.
 2. Secondary and published sources:

Ekberg, Carl J., Colonial Ste. Genevieve, An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier (Gerald, Missouri: The Patrice Press, 1985).

Franzwa, Gregory M., The Story of Old Ste. Genevieve (St. Louis: The Patrice Press, 1967).

Peterson, Charles E., "Early Ste. Genevieve and its Architecture," The Missouri Historical Review, XXXV:2 (January 1941), pp. 207-232.

Porterfield, Neil H. "Ste. Genevieve, Missouri," in John Francis McDermott, editor, Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), pp. 141-177.

Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration, Missouri, A Guide to the "Show Me" State (Missouri State Highway Department, 1941).

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan. Documentation was carried out during the summer of 1985 at the HABS field office in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, by project supervisor Osmund Overby (University of Missouri-Columbia), project architects James Q. Marsh (Hemet, California), William D. Cesaletti (Keaau, Hawaii), and Terance A. Gruenhagen (North Dakota State University), and project historian Claudia A. Barbero (University of Missouri-Columbia).

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Research Assistant
University of Missouri-Columbia
January 17, 1987

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